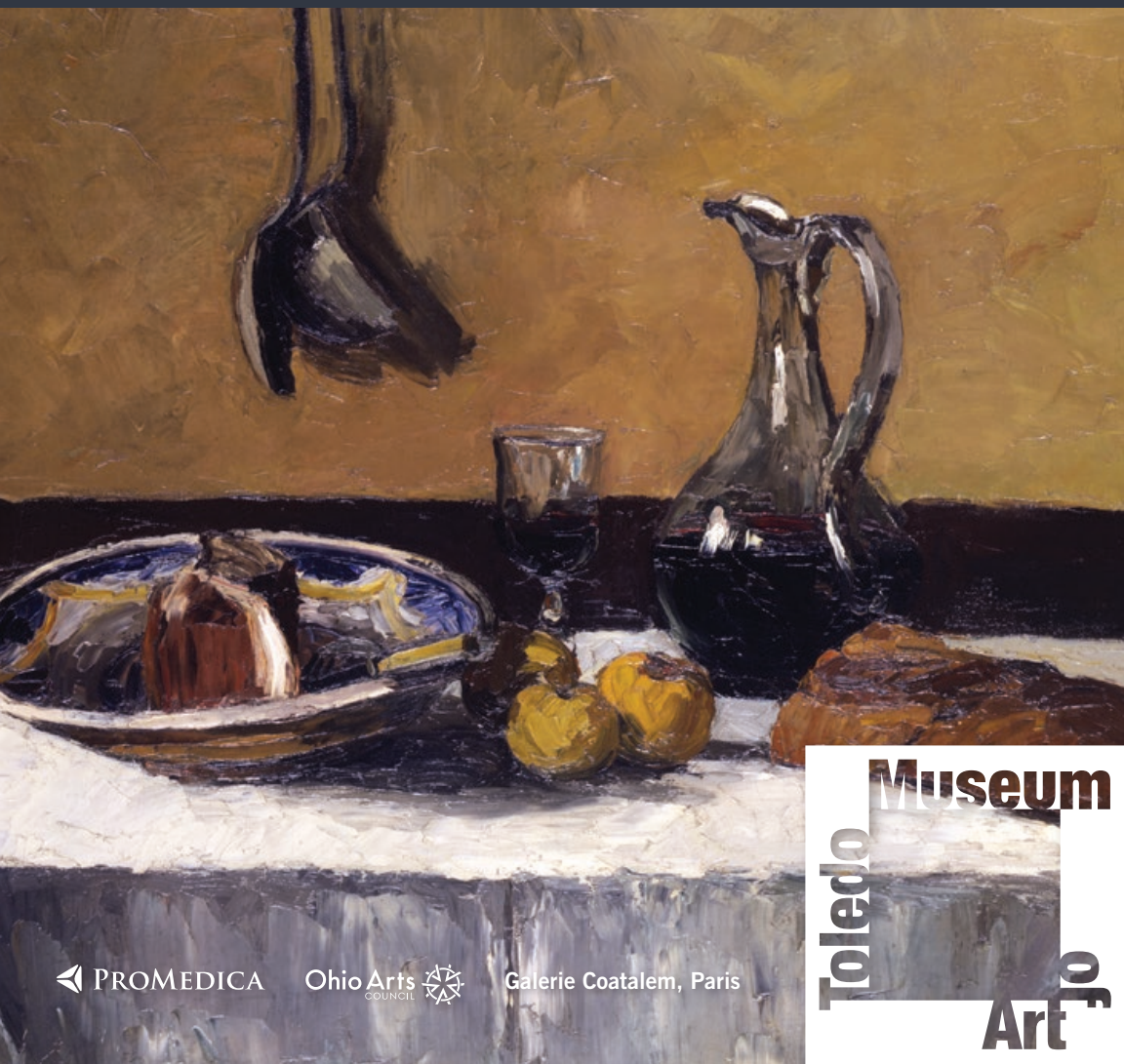


ONE EACH:

*Still Lives by Pissarro, Cézanne,
Manet & Friends*

Toledo Museum of Art
Jan. 18–April 12, 2020

Cincinnati Art Museum
May 15–Aug. 9, 2020



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ONE EACH:

*Still Lives by Pissarro, Cézanne,
Manet & Friends*

Lawrence W. Nichols

William Hutton Senior Curator, European and American Painting
and Sculpture before 1900, Toledo Museum of Art

FIG. 1



In France beginning in the 1860s, the still life became a vehicle for Realist and Impressionist artists to experiment with form, space, and composition. One of the most extraordinary examples of this is Camille Pissarro's (1830–1903) *Still Life* of 1867.

Camille Pissarro, *Still Life*, 1867

The experience of comprehending Pissarro's *Still Life* (Fig. 1) begins with the visual and metamorphoses into a recognition of the tactile. A suspended spoon and ladle, a patterned ceramic bowl containing a ham and a meat fork (three curved tines of which are visible), three apples, half a loaf of bread, and a carafe and glass each partially filled with red wine are organized in front of or upon four rectangular color fields—ochre wall, dark brown dado, and two views of a white tablecloth (tabletop and table front). The beguiling placement of the motifs—silhouetted or overlapping, casting shadows or reflecting light—harmonize rhythmically if asymmetrically, deftly endowing the austere arrangement with stability and structure. Pissarro includes intentionally spatially ambiguous passages, such as where the white cloth appears to rise to the lip of the bowl at far left and the way the table seems taller—by as much as half an inch—on the right half than on the left (follow the line of the back edge of the table where it passes behind the bowl on the left and where it emerges between the wine glass and carafe). These disparities bequeath the objects with an immutability that transcends objectivity. In short, the composition entralls the eye.

Yet the subject of Pissarro's mesmerizing painting is as much the relentless display of *how* it was created, as it is *what* is represented. Over most of his canvas, Pissarro

FIG. 1
Camille Pissarro,
Still Life, 1867. Toledo
Museum of Art, 1949.6

FIG. 2
Camille Pissarro, *Still Life*, detail.

1. Campbell, Christopher B., "Pissarro and the Palette Knife: Two Pictures from 1867," *Apollo*, vol. 136, no. 369, Nov. 1992, pp. 311–14. Campbell notes that rather than a palette knife as commonly stated, Pissarro utilized a painting knife, which has a "resilient springiness." "When a painting knife is loaded with paint (on its underside), held at a slight angle, and pushed or pulled across the surface of the canvas, the action of the gesture is similar to plastering a wall; a smooth, even plaque of paint is squeezed out as the blade simultaneously deposits the paint and flattens it out with the knife's trailing edge."

employed a painting knife to boldly, even aggressively, apply his paint. The flat surfaces are broken with sculpted areas of impasto, "smoothed out, covered over, beaten down, built up, carved and modelled like solid stuff," as one writer describes the artist's "insistent exposure of the means of [the painting's] fabrication."¹ This is most readily detected in the swatches of paint that define the tablecloth (Fig. 2) and is pervasive throughout much of the painting. Pissarro also worked certain areas with a brush, such as the strokes defining the contours of the apples and the wine glass, and within the gray section of the round ladle (Fig. 3). This deliberate juxtaposition of techniques gives a rich and vibrant physicality to the paint surface that one perceives, as it were, through the sense of touch. It is with this duality of perception that Pissarro's *Still Life* claims such great visual energy and emotional power. In a later year, the painter would write to his son Lucien, who was himself pursuing a career as an artist, "Don't bother trying to look for something new: you won't find novelty in the subject matter, but in the way you express it."

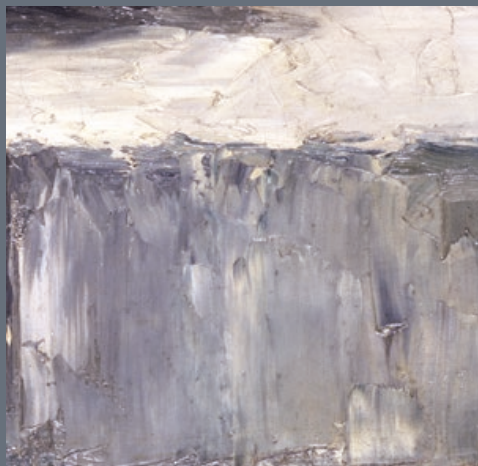


FIG. 2



FIG. 3

FIG. 3
Camille Pissarro, *Still
Life*, detail.

French Still Lives of the 1860s

Disparaged since the seventeenth century as the lowest category of picture-making because it was regarded as mere imitation, still life painting enjoyed new stature beginning in the 1860s.² A significant reason for this breakdown of the old hierarchy was the revival in appreciation for the eighteenth-century French master of the genre, Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin (1699–1779). Acclaimed for his profoundly subtle compositional arrangements and considered a master of light, Chardin's paintings, such as *The Meat Day Meal* of 1731, which entered the Louvre in 1852 (Fig. 4), were of great influence for a group of artists who pursued a Realist aesthetic, among them François Bonvin (1817–1887).

The rather conventional mimeticism of his canvases, for example *Still Life with Lemon and Oysters* of 1858 (Fig. 5), nonetheless was influential on Pissarro and other Impressionists. So too were works by Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), whose *The Trellis* (Fig. 6), which features an array of cut flowers being arranged on an outdoor trellis by a young woman,

FIG. 4

Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin, *The Meat Day Meal*. Oil on copper, 1731. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 3205

FIG. 5

François Bonvin, *Still Life with Lemon and Oysters*. Oil on canvas, 1858. Sotheby's, New York, 23 May 1997, lot 58.



FIG. 4

2. See Jeannene M. Przblyski, "The Makings of Modern Still Life in the 1860s" and George T.M. Shackelford, "Impressionism and the Still-Life Tradition" in: *Impressionist Still Life*, catalogue by Eliza E. Rathbone and George T. M. Shackelford, Washington, D.C.: The Phillips Collection and Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 2001–2002, pp. 28–33 and 20–27, respectively.



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

was painted in the summer of 1862 in the southwest of France. A pupil of Courbet's, Henri Fantin-Latour (1836–1904), who specialized in still lifes, was renowned for his precise rendering of nature, in part a reflection of the mid-nineteenth-century fascination with photography (Fig. 7).



FIG. 7

FIG. 6
Gustave Courbet,
The Trellis, 1862.
Toledo Museum of Art,
1950.309

FIG. 7
Henri Fantin-Latour,
Flowers and Fruit, 1866.
Toledo Museum of Art,
1951.363

Monet / Manet / Bazille / Cézanne

ONE EACH includes four other still life paintings by renowned French artists whose careers began in earnest in the 1860s. Claude Monet's (1840–1926) *Still Life with Bottle, Carafe, Bread, and Wine* of about 1862–63 (Fig. 8) is one of the artist's earliest creations, and not surprisingly the compositional arrangement of its numerous vessels and foodstuffs has a certain unresolved quality to it. As in most of the other works in the exhibition, we see a white tablecloth, a motif that commonly appears in still life paintings of this decade, precedents for which are found in Chardin as well as in seventeenth-century Dutch paintings.



FIG. 8

Édouard Manet (1832–1883) quite often included still life elements in his renowned figure paintings, but he also engaged in pure still lifes, such as his *Fish (Still Life)* of 1864 (Fig. 9). Responding to a range of sources, including Dutch and Spanish seventeenth-century painters, Chardin, and Realists such as Bonvin, Manet developed his own distinctly personal variety of Realism. One of a dozen still lifes of tabletops from the years 1864–69 and painted in Boulogne-sur-Mer on the north coast of France, the canvas depicts a large, diagonally

FIG. 8
Claude Monet, *Still Life with Bottle, Carafe, Bread, and Wine*, about 1862–63.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 2014.18.32



FIG. 9

positioned carp surrounded by oysters, a red mullet, a slithering eel, a lemon, a knife, and a stockpot. Manet's *Fish* may well have been known firsthand by Frédéric Bazille (1841–1870), whose *Still Life with Fish* of 1866 (Fig. 10) portrays a pike, a carp, and a basket of mussels resting on a disheveled tablecloth upon a cutting block.

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), one of the most accomplished still life painters of all time, also commenced his activity with the subject in the 1860s. His *Still Life with Bread and Eggs* of 1865 (Fig. 11) is perhaps the most ambitious composition of his first decade of activity. In a kitchen scene consisting of simple utensils and meager fare—a pitcher, onions, eggs, a loaf of bread, a glass, a knife, and a crumpled white tablecloth with tan border, all atop a plain wooden table—Cézanne integrated what he saw in the immediacy of Courbet's and Manet's painterly touch. In so doing, he anticipated the rough paint application and sketchiness of Pissarro's *Still Life* of 1867 (Fig. 1).



FIG. 10

FIG. 9
Édouard Manet, *Fish*
(*Still Life*), 1864. The
Art Institute of Chicago,
1942.311

FIG. 10
Frédéric Bazille, *Still
Life with Fish*, 1866.
Detroit Institute of
Arts, 1988.9

FIG. 11
Paul Cézanne, *Still Life
with Bread and Eggs*,
1865. Cincinnati Art
Museum, 1955.73



FIG. 11



FIG. 12

Legacy

French still life painters active in the 1860s drew on the past while unleashing an artistic revolution. “The Louvre will burn,” wrote the artist Antoine Guillemet in 1866, employing intentionally incendiary and rhetorical language to describe and endorse the artistic upheaval that his close acquaintances Pissarro and Cézanne were fomenting with their shocking canvases of the mid- to late 1860s. Their paintings, particularly those of Cézanne in later decades of the nineteenth century, had a lasting influence on several generations of artists, including no less a figure than Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who with others would stun the art world with the introduction of Cubism at the outset of the 20th century (Fig. 12). As one critic writing in 1927 would have it, “An apple by Paul Cézanne is of more consequence artistically than the head of a Madonna by Raphael. [...] It is the emotional power of the artist that counts, not the subject matter.”³

FIG. 12
Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Glass and Lemon*.
Oil on canvas, 1910.
Cincinnati Art Museum,
1967.1428

3. Clarence Bulliet, *Apples & Madonnas: Emotional Expression in Modern Art*, Chicago: Pascal Covici, 1927, p. 1, as quoted in Richard Schiff, “Apples and Abstraction” in: *Impressionist Still Life* (op. cit.), p. 42.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Frédéric Bazille (French, 1841–1870), *Still Life with Fish*. Oil on canvas, 1866. 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (63.5 x 81.9 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts, 1988.9.

Cincinnati only.

Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906), *Still Life with Bread and Eggs*. Oil on canvas, 1865. 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 30 in. (59.1 x 76.2 cm). Cincinnati Art Museum, 1955.73

Gustave Courbet (French, 1819–1877), *The Trellis*. Oil on canvas, 1862. 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 53 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (109.8 x 135.2 cm). Toledo Museum of Art, 1950.309. **Toledo only.**

Henri Fantin-Latour (French, 1836–1904), *Flowers and Fruit*. Oil on canvas, 1866. 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ (73 x 59.7 cm). Toledo Museum of Art, 1951.363.

Toledo only.

Édouard Manet (French, 1832–1883), *Fish (Still Life)*. Oil on canvas, 1864. 28 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (73.4 x 92.1 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago, 1942.311

Claude Monet (French, 1840–1926), *Still Life with Bottle, Carafe, Bread, and Wine*. Oil on canvas, about 1862–63. 15 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 23 $\frac{9}{16}$ in. (40.5 x 59.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 2014.18.32

Camille Pissarro (French, 1830–1903), *Still Life*. Oil on canvas, 1867. 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (81 x 99.6 cm). Toledo Museum of Art, 1949.6

SELECTED STILL LIVES

in the Toledo Museum of Art's Collection

Still lifes—arrangements of often inanimate objects such as food, tableware, and cut flowers—have been an important subject for artists since ancient times. Look for these examples throughout the Museum.



Raphaelle Peale, *Still Life with Oranges*, about 1818



William Michael Harnett, *Still Life with the Toledo Blade*, 1886



Anne Vallayer-Coster, *Still Life with Lobster*, 1781



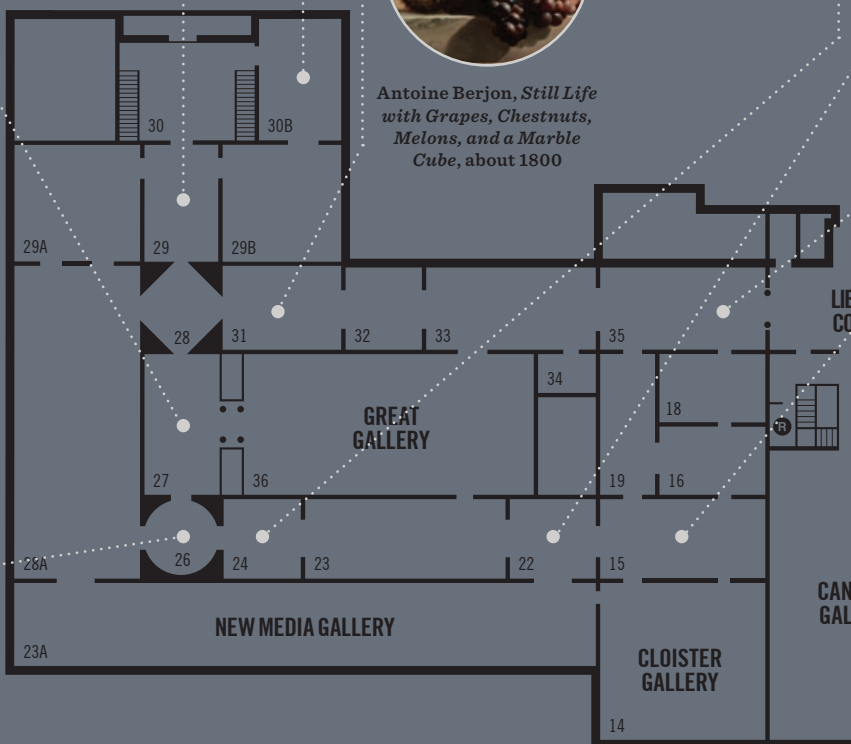
Antoine Berjon, *Still Life with Grapes, Chestnuts, Melons, and a Marble Cube*, about 1800



Anne Vallayer-Coster, *Still Life with Game*, 1782



Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Still Life with Musette and Violin*, 1725





Giuseppe Recco, *Kitchen Interior with a Piglet*, about 1660



Jan Bogaerts, *Still Life with Azaleas*, 1912



Flora C. Mace and Joey Kirkpatrick, *Still Life with Pear*, 1992–94



Rachel Ruysch, *Flower Still Life*, about 1726



Style of Bernard Palissy, *Dish*, about 1575–1600



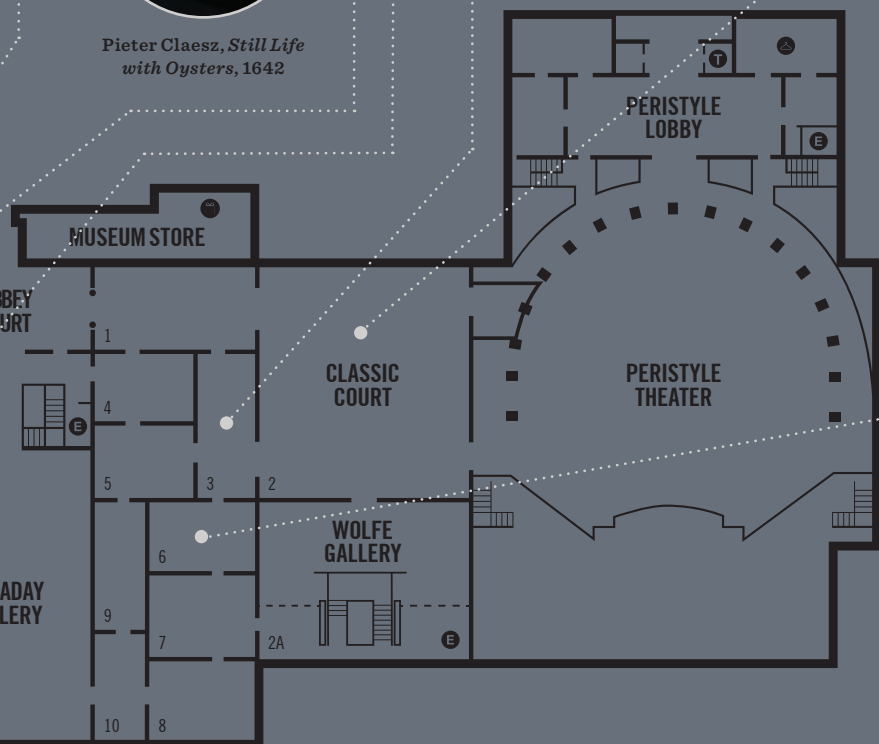
Giorgio Morandi, *Still Life with a Bottle*, about 1951



Pieter Claesz, *Still Life with Oysters*, 1642



Workshop of Asteas/Python, *Fish Plate*, about 340–330 BCE



Wayne Thiebaud, *Roast Beef Dinner (Trucker's Supper)*, 1963



Georges Braque, *Still Life with Fish*, 1941

EXHIBITION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Curator Talk: Lawrence W. Nichols,
The Oxymoronic Genre—Still Life Painting

Jan. 18: 2 p.m. | Little Theater

Join exhibition curator Lawrence W. Nichols for an exploration of the beguiling and deceptively complex subject matter of the still life.

Masters Series: Ivan Gaskell,
Still Life, Trompe l'oeil, and Vanity

Feb. 27: 6 p.m. | Peristyle

In this lecture, Ivan Gaskell (Professor of Cultural History, Bard Graduate Center, New York City) looks at some of the ways in which artists have depicted ordinary things—including those that constitute still life—so as to trick the beholder's eyes into thinking that those very items are present. The Masters Series is sponsored by the TMA Ambassadors.

Drawing in the Galleries

Jan. 25: 2–3 p.m.

Mar. 7: 2–3 p.m.

Feb. 8: 2–3 p.m.

Mar. 21: 2–3 p.m.

Feb. 22: 2–3 p.m.

View mesmerizing compositions in the special exhibition *ONE EACH: Still Lives by Pissarro, Cézanne, Manet & Friends*, then spend time close-looking and sketching your own still life. Drawing in the Galleries is facilitated by an art instructor and all supplies are provided. No experience or registration necessary.